

Attachment #1a

CBC Chapter 10

MEANS OF EGRESS

Section 1026 - EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE

1026.1 General. In addition to the means of egress required by this chapter, provisions shall be made for emergency escape and rescue in Group R and I-1 occupancies. Basements and sleeping rooms below the fourth story above grade plane shall have at least one exterior emergency escape and rescue opening in accordance with this section. Where basements contain one or more sleeping rooms, emergency egress and rescue openings shall be required in each sleeping room, but shall not be required in adjoining areas of the basement. Such openings shall open directly into a public way or to a yard or court that opens to a public way.

Exceptions:

- ~~1. In other than Group R-3 occupancies, buildings equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2.~~
- ~~2. In other than Group R-3 occupancies, sleeping rooms provided with a door to a fire-resistance-rated corridor having access to two remote exits in opposite directions.~~
- ~~13. The emergency escape and rescue opening is permitted to open onto a balcony within an atrium in accordance with the requirements of Section 404, provided the balcony provides access to an exit and the dwelling unit or sleeping unit has a means of egress that is not open to the atrium.~~
- ~~24. Basements without sleeping rooms with a ceiling height of less than 80 inches (2032 mm) shall not be required to have emergency escape and rescue windows.~~
- ~~35. High-rise buildings without sleeping rooms in accordance with Section 403.~~
- ~~46. Emergency escape and rescue openings are not required from basements or sleeping rooms that have an exit door or exit access door that opens directly into a public way or to a yard, court or exterior exit balcony that ~~opens~~ provides access to a public way.~~
- ~~57. Basements without habitable spaces and having no more than 200 square feet (18.6 m²) in floor area shall not be required to have emergency escape windows.~~

Purpose/Rationale:

(N) Per NFPA, nationwide between 1994 through 1998 fire deaths in homes happened between midnight and 6 AM 49.7% (nearly ½) of the time. During these hours, most people would be asleep in their sleeping areas. Because of this, emergency escape and rescue openings have been required for sleeping rooms in R occupancies built in California for more than 50 years. Without the requirement for emergency escape and rescue openings, we could find that the exterior walls of the sleeping rooms are built on the property line, eliminating access to them or worse yet, have no exterior walls at all. Firefighter safety is also affected as not only residents may be forced to exit the structure through the emergency escape and rescue openings. Firefighters have found it necessary to directly enter residential occupancy's sleeping rooms through direct access methods as well as being forced out these same openings when the emergency situation got out of control. The existing exception 1 could eliminate these openings based on the installation of fire sprinkler systems which could allow for the elimination of fire sprinklers in attics, bathrooms, closets and garages. Fires in these unsprinklered areas may generate quantities of smoke which necessitate alternate egress paths for the occupants. The existing exception 2 allows for elimination of the rescue openings when direct access is provided to a rated corridor which can have non rated penetrations or doors propped open. This may leave sleeping residents with little options for their escape or rescue in an emergency. The existing exception 4 eliminates rescue openings for basements based solely on ceiling height leaving sleeping occupants with little avenue for escape. The existing exception 5 eliminates rescue openings for high rise buildings based on the fact that the building is a high rise. Since the Fire Department typically has easy access to the first four floors of most buildings, there is no reason to give high rise buildings with sleeping rooms an exception to the first four floors any more than any other multistory building less than 75 feet in height. The existing exception 6 allows an exception for rescue openings when a door is provided to specified outdoor areas. Having a door to a yard, court or exterior exit balcony that simply opens to a public way does not guarantee that it will provide access to the public way.